

# **New report shows that respect for Arctic states, local people, and the environment is fundamental to Arctic engagement**

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Today, for the first time, the UK Government has set out its approach to the Arctic. The policy towards the Arctic is set out in the Arctic Policy Framework - Adapting To Change: UK policy towards the Arctic.

The document, which was put together with input from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) which supports UK research in the Arctic, outlines how the UK will continue to support and respect the sovereign rights of the Arctic States; the peoples who live and work in the Arctic; and the unique and fragile natural environment. At the same time it outlines the UK's legitimate interests in the region, our priorities for practical action and our willingness to show leadership in appropriate areas.

Foreign Office Minister Mark Simmonds said:

"The Arctic is one of the most dynamic and influential regions of the world, despite its remoteness from large population centres and its often challenging geographical and climatic conditions. It is on the frontier of [global climate change](#) impacts."

"Adapting To Change: UK policy towards the Arctic sets out for the first time the detail of the UK's interests in the Arctic, how we will work with Arctic States and the wider international community, and what expertise the UK can offer to help meet some of the long-term challenges facing

the region."

Science and Universities Minister David Willetts said:

"Understanding what is driving the rapid changes affecting the Arctic environment is an urgent scientific challenge; the impact of these changes are of global significance."

"As set out in this new framework, the UK will promote greater understanding of the Arctic through international scientific collaboration and will promote [policy](#) development on the basis of sound evidence. Co-operation, respect and appropriate leadership will be central to the UK's approach when working with the Arctic states."

Adapting To Change recognises the role British Antarctic Survey plays in supporting polar science in the region, including the operation of RSS James Clark Ross and its Twin Otter aircraft, and its managing of the Natural Environment Research Council's Arctic station in Svalbard. It also highlights other BAS-led programmes like the NERC Arctic Research Programme, and the European Union funded programmes ice2sea and ICE-ARC.

**More information:** The publication of 'Adapting To Change: UK policy towards the Arctic' follows the Government's response to the Environmental Audit Committee's report into Protecting the Arctic, which was published in January 2013.

Provided by British Antarctic Survey

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